



# Customer Collaboration

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## Customer Collaboration— A Richer Customer Experience Drives Profits

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A Frost & Sullivan  
White Paper

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## TRADITIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE—NOT GOOD ENOUGH ANYMORE

It should come as no surprise that people are frequently dissatisfied and annoyed with the level of customer service they receive from the companies and organizations with which they do business. Surveys consistently find that many people are not getting the kind of service and help they feel they deserve. Complaints run the gamut from not being able to find answers on company Web sites, to not being able to speak with a knowledgeable company representative. Given the countless complex electronic devices in the market today, there is tremendous frustration with the inability to actually “show” an agent the problem or issue. The solution is for agents to securely collaborate with customers using proven Web collaboration technologies that will enrich the customer experience and drive profits.

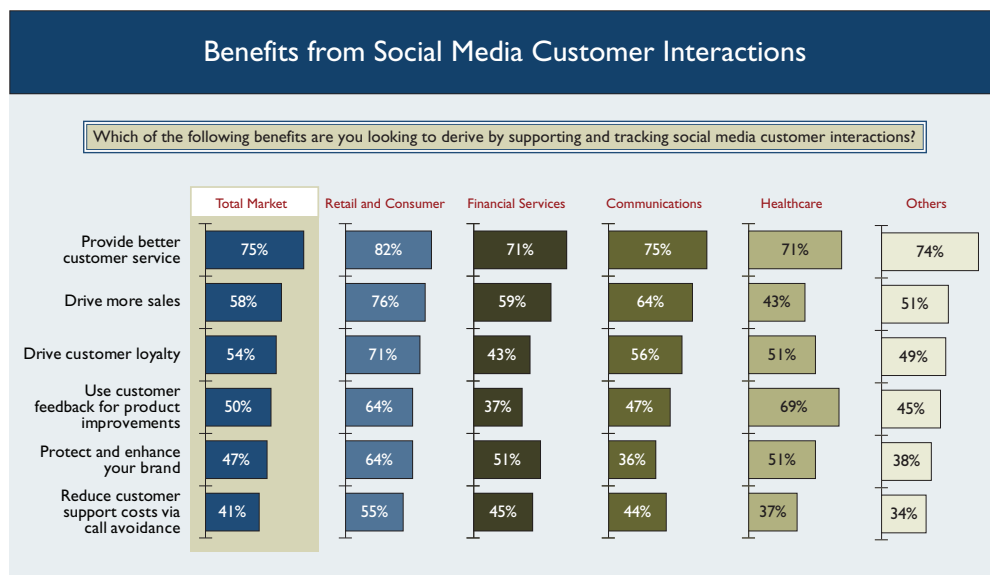
There is a concerted effort across industries to dramatically improve the customer experience. In many cases, social media has lifted the veil to expose a gap between a company's marketing claims and the true quality of their products and service delivery. Customers are no longer willing to suffer in relative silence. They have taken to the Internet to complain and warn others about shoddy products, unethical practices, and poor customer service. Increasingly, customers are willing to vote with their wallets in favor of companies that provide an exceptional customer experience.

Frost & Sullivan conducted a recent survey of contact center decision makers. Based on these findings, we believe that business interest in social media customer support is high across industries. Figure 1.0 shows the benefits that respondents expect by supporting and tracking social media interactions. Providing better customer service is the number one benefit sought or derived from social media customer support, followed by driving more sales and customer loyalty. In some verticals such as healthcare and retail and consumer, there is also a lot of interest in using customer collaboration for product improvements. The ‘others’ category includes travel and hospitality, hi-tech, government and education, outsourcing, utilities, industrial, and other verticals.

*People are willing to vote with their wallets in favor of companies that provide an exceptional customer experience.*

*One of the most impactful ways to improve the customer experience is to join forces with customers using collaboration tools such as web co-browsing, screen-sharing, white boarding, form-filling, conferencing, pre-recorded video, agent-to-expert collaboration, and live desktop video.*

**Figure 1.0**



Source: Frost & Sullivan

Regardless of the vertical, improving customer service has become synonymous with improving the customer experience. One of the strongest ways to improve the customer experience is to join forces with customers using collaboration tools such as Web co-browsing, screen-sharing, white boarding, form-filling, conferencing, pre-recorded video, agent-to-expert collaboration, and live desktop video. Here are some examples of how customer collaboration can improve the customer experience:

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

For customer service, the typical use case is a customer communicating with a service representative or with a subject matter expert over the telephone or via online chat.

Communicating solely by voice in today’s multi-channel environment may result in a less than optimal outcome. This is because this simple communication is essentially an exchange of information. Collaboration, on the other hand, involves taking the information exchanged and applying advanced tools to achieve a shared goal: providing the customer with better answers and options along with a highly satisfying and richer customer service experience. This enhanced multimedia environment is the conduit for the agent to better explain and resolve customer inquiries—be it a sales, service, or technical support call.

With the use of the appropriate collaboration tools, a contact center rep can illustrate and demonstrate the solution to the customer as opposed to just telling them. In a practical sense, the customer collaboration enhancement now means adding a number of exciting new elements. The end result is a vastly improved client interaction that engenders greater customer loyalty. Figure 2.0 provides examples that illustrate the difference that collaboration can make in customer service delivery.

Figure 2.0

Customer Service without Collaboration	Customer Service with Collaboration
Customer experiences problems with the Web site billing interface but can't show the agent where they're having problems	Agent uses chat and secure desktop sharing to better understand the customer's issue and completes the customer payment online
Agent tries to reach out to an expert via phone or IM but has difficulty explaining the issue via voice or text	Agent invites an expert to join a voice and Web conference with the customer. Expert now sees the agent's/customer's screen and collaboratively solves the customer's issue
Agent isn't able to share Web sites, documents, etc. to resolve a customer service issue with the features of a new product	Agent can show the customer where to find information, collaborate with an on-line community, and enroll in training classes by sharing their screen with the customer

## TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The ability to take over remote control in an IT helpdesk environment allows the agent to visualize exactly what the end-user is seeing and experiencing on the desktop. The ability to make changes to a computer configuration remotely is particularly powerful for technical support. This is because it literally puts the contact center 'subject matter expert' (SME) in the driver's seat in a collaborative effort to solve the initial problem. In this manner, we move to a *remote service relationship platform*, which paves the way for increased trust between the customer and the company.

Typical remote tech support functions include: virus removal, email setup, networking issues, general support for PC's, phones, printers, routers, home networks, digital cameras, MP3 players, and more. This capability allows tech support centers to expand their geographic reach and reduce the cost of technical support provisioning. By using customer collaboration tools, agents can lead customers in a screen sharing mode to find answers to their questions and share information, which can resolve issues more quickly. Figure 3.0 shows examples that highlight the difference that collaboration can make in the technical support arena.

*The latest collaboration tools make it easy for consumers to be assisted over a wide range of issues and devices including PCs, phones, printers, routers, home networks, digital cameras, MP3 players and more.*

**Figure 3.0**

<b>Tech Support without Collaboration</b>	<b>Tech Support with Collaboration</b>
Technician is unable to understand the issue because they cannot 'recreate' the problem first-hand	Technician can now view the exact error message on the client's PC and can consult the knowledge base or collaborate with a subject matter expert using chat or video conferencing
The client has a software bug or malware infection. The device has locked up and the client dials the tech support hotline for help and explains the issue over the phone	Technician securely takes over the client's machine to detect and remove virus or malware from the PC. Client can learn self-administered diagnostics directly from the technician
New product setup-owner's manual does not provide complete instructions to personalize the experience for the customer	Technician uses pre-recorded video to demo the product setup and provide step-by-step instructions for future reference

**SALES SUPPORT**

For sales support, the typical use case is a customer interacting with a sales support representative over the telephone or chat channel. Like the customer service use cases, the customer collaboration enhancement would add any number of new tools to the existing voice or chat communication between the client and sales support team member. New product or service initialization/set-ups are also good candidate applications for a Customer Collaboration solution. In these programs, agents can lead customers in co-browsing mode to find answers to their questions and information that can help them make smarter sales decisions. The value-add sales activities that this richer communications environment would support include:

- Assistance in finding desired product/service information
- Information on product alternatives and comparisons
- Related products and accessories
- Purchase/order forms and acquisition processes
- Payment alternatives

Figure 4.0 provides examples that illustrate the difference that collaboration can make in sales support delivery.

Figure 4.0

Sales Support without Collaboration	Sales Support with Collaboration
Customer is shopping for a new mobile device and is looking to upgrade to a model and plan that suits unique family needs for speed, texting, and video. Calls in for help from contact center agent	Customer is invited to collaborate with a sales support agent. The agent collaborates online via Web conference and uses video sales brochures to demonstrate feature/functionality of several devices. Agent points the customer to the best family plan right on the customer's browser window
Sales teams and partner organizations are dispersed globally. This requires the deployment of costly and complex in-person training delivery for new products and services	Instructors/presenters can easily share and exchange information with attendees. Sessions can be recorded for multiple playback as needed. Eliminates the need for travel as multi-party video conferencing is supported in real-time on mobile devices
Sales team members have to travel to customer locations to do in-person product demonstrations for new prospects	Using collaboration tools, sales support staff can share and exchange information with new customers using streaming video, conferencing, and live chat regardless of where they're located

## INTERNAL IT HELPDESK

In the enterprise, internal company helpdesks serve a critical role in helping employees with a myriad of technical issues. A single IT staff member may field dozens of daily inquiries for technical support, covering a wide range of technologies including:

- Computer hardware
- Telephone systems
- PC operating systems
- Desktop applications
- Network connectivity
- Security patches and upgrades

This opens up a new collaborative world, whereby employees can open a Web conference, share the desktop with an IT expert, and troubleshoot in real-time. The immediate benefit is the speed with which an employee gets service and problem resolution. The IT team gains more visibility and control over users' hardware and network activity while greatly improving productivity, quality delivery, and internal customer satisfaction. Figure 5.0 provides examples that illustrate the difference that collaboration can make in the delivery of IT Helpdesk services.



**Figure 5.0**

IT Helpdesk without Collaboration	IT Helpdesk with Collaboration
New employee experiences difficulty with their new PC and soft phone application. IT helpdesk cannot see the employee's issue so they 'fly blind' and ask a lot of questions to understand the issues	IT technician takes control of the employees' PCs using a secure Web collaboration session. IT staff quickly resolves the problems in order to maximize employee productivity
IT departments, within the enterprise and across multiple geographies, lack the tools to plan for and respond to new security threats or network outages caused by sudden violent weather conditions	IT teams can utilize multiple collaboration tools including Web conferencing, document uploading, desk sharing, and white-boarding to simulate events and practice disaster recovery contingency activities
A university's increase in technology demands and the need to expand help desk support and network services delivery to thousands of students, faculty, staff, and alumni with limited budget and IT personnel resources	A small campus IT team uses collaboration tools to remotely diagnose systems, network connectivity, and desktop applications, allowing the IT department to handle the increased demand without hiring more staff

**CUSTOMER COLLABORATION: BUSINESS VALUES**

*It's well known that improved customer service contributes to improved brand loyalty—positively impacting future sales and profits. Customer collaboration can increase close rates, shorten sales cycles, lower website shopping cart abandons, and increase repeat purchase opportunities.*

Whether it seems fair or not, customers transfer these high expectations of excellent experiences across industries and product categories. For example, a great vacation experience can lead a person to expect an equally satisfying vehicle purchase experience. Companies of all sizes and across all industries must be prepared to deliver on elevated customer demands.

Customer service and IT helpdesk operations costs can be lowered by shortening the time to problem resolution, by reducing escalations and follow-up work in addition to reducing unnecessary call backs that decrease first contact resolution (FCR) rates. It's well known that improved customer service contributes to improved brand loyalty, positively impacting future sales and profits. Customer collaboration can increase close rates, shorten sales cycles, lower Web site shopping cart abandons, and increase repeat purchase opportunities. Agent desktop video can be an excellent fit here. The added benefit is the new level of trust and relationship-building between traditional customer service associates and the customer. This natural outcome is often highlighted by way of positive social media commentary from consumers.

## CUSTOMER COLLABORATION APPLICATION FUNCTIONALITY

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A wide variety of applications and techniques can be used to improve customer collaboration in support of customer service, sales, and tech support. Common Web collaboration tools include:

- Chat
- Desktop sharing
- Co-browsing
- White-boarding
- URL push
- Application sharing

### **Features**

- Easy one-step scheduling for a voice and Web conference
- Elevate existing voice call or voice conference to Web collaboration with one-click
- No installation required on the customer's PC
- Automatic language setting based on PC language setting
- Document uploading

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN CUSTOMER COLLABORATION SOLUTIONS

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The demand for customer collaboration solutions is somewhat new but growing fast. Not surprising for a new market is the confusion caused by competing vendors' claims for their solutions. Below we provide a "what to look for" list as an aid to sorting out these claims:

- Web-based co-browsing functionality that works with all modern browsers and computer operating systems found in the market, including those from Microsoft, Apple, and Google
- Support for mobile clients
- If client software needs to be installed on the customer's PC, it must not leave any residual software after the session ends
- Tight integration with leading contact center application suites
- Contact center application integration with contact center agent tools, as well as contact work-flows and reporting
- Secure agent-to-customer connections that allow customers to end the session at any time

*Every aspect of the customer's interaction must be considered and planned for in order to provide memorable customer experiences. The level of coordination between the applications supporting customers' experiences must be very high.*

- Flexibility and scalability
- Support for all required languages
- Full end-to-end reporting capability
- Capability to record 100% of customer interactions
- Video capable
- Integration toolkits that support customization/extension of functionality
- Tools that can support a variety of customer experiences: Customer Service, Sales Support, Tech Support, IT Helpdesk, etc.

### **SIEMENS ENTERPRISE COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORTS A FULL RANGE OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES**

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Siemens Enterprise Communications Customer Collaboration Solution, consisting of the OpenScape™ Contact Center application suite and its OpenScape Web Collaboration Secure Advisor application, supports a full range of customer experiences. This includes Customer Service, Sales, Tech Support, IT Helpdesk, and more. These broad capabilities support strategies for customer service and sales support, which contain high degrees of customer segmentation. Bare bones, do-it-yourself support may be appropriate to meet the needs of some customers or situations. Highly assisted, collaborative, and rich customer experiences may be more appropriate at different times and for other situations.

### **SEAMLESS APPLICATION INTEROPERABILITY IS ONE KEY**

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Good service or support only requires reasonably good applications and processes. Great service and great support requires much more. Every aspect of the customer's interaction must be considered and planned for in order to provide memorable customer experiences. The level of coordination between the applications supporting customers' experiences must be very high. Only through seamless application interoperability can these levels of coordination be achieved. Siemens Enterprise Communications has designed its OpenScape Contact Center and its OpenScapeWeb Collaboration applications to work seamlessly together. And unlike third party applications, Siemens Enterprise Communications commits to keeping these application sets in synch as the products are evolved and enhanced over time.

## EASE-OF-USE IS THE OTHER KEY

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Siemens Enterprise Communications believes in building intuitive interfaces. The contact center application suite and Web collaboration application are designed with easy-to-use end-user and administrative interfaces. They have been engineered to have a common look and feel. This eliminates the usual disconnects and disruptions commonly found in independently designed application systems. Ease-of-use design elements in Siemens Enterprise Communications' OpenScope Web Collaboration application include:

- Intuitive user interfaces
- One-click application launch
- One-click media morphing (from voice to Web to video)
- Password protected collaboration sessions
- Secure Connect Service: secure 256-bit AES encrypted sessions that cannot be decrypted on the server
- Temporary sessions that leave no residual data and do not make any entries in the registry control: customer is invited to join the session and can end the session at any time
- Automatic language recognition which includes support for:

English	Polish
German	Greek
French	Russian
Italian	Turkish
Spanish	Japanese
Portuguese	Chinese
Dutch	

## THE SIEMENS ENTERPRISE COMMUNICATIONS DIFFERENCE: SECURITY!

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It is critically important for a solution provider to engineer high levels of security into the application when an agent takes over a customer's personal computer, chats, and collaborates. The four major threats to a secure messaging and collaboration infrastructure include:

- Malware
- Spam
- Unauthorized network access
- Unauthorized data access

OpenScope Web Collaboration is the only solution of its kind featuring Secure Connect Service (SCS). Unlike competitive solutions, SCS prevents hackers from viewing collaboration content on Web servers by enabling data-encryption between clients and Web Collaboration Servers. SCS is safe to use for confidential sessions with external partners and will securely transfer files across company borders.

Most importantly, SCS is industry-certified by TÜV SÜD for data security and functionality.

### **EASE-OF-USE DESIGN ELEMENTS IN SIEMENS ENTERPRISE COMMUNICATIONS' OPENSCAPE CONTACT CENTER INCLUDE:**

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- User configurable desktop clients
- Tear-off and park graphical user interface features
- Visually oriented agent feedback tools
- Visual administration tools for routing and reporting

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Before diving into customer collaboration, enterprises should start by creating a customer experience vision. This vision would start with the business' brand messages and values statement. It must describe how working more closely with customers would support the brand. It would include how and when customer collaboration applications and techniques would be used with customers—the use cases and customer interaction channels.

Next, enterprises should create strategies to achieve improved customer collaboration and a vision for richer customer experiences. This would include business process changes, collaboration applications and linkages with existing customer sales, and support systems, all within realistic time frames. Introducing customer collaboration solutions, as discussed in this whitepaper, can dramatically enhance customer service, increase sales, and lower the cost of providing world class support for your clients.



## ABOUT SIEMENS ENTERPRISE COMMUNICATIONS

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Siemens Enterprise Communications is a premier provider of end-to-end enterprise communications solutions that use open, standards-based architectures to unify communications and business applications for a seamless collaboration experience. This award-winning "open communications" approach enables organizations to improve productivity and reduce costs through easy-to-deploy solutions that work within existing IT environments, delivering operational efficiencies. It is the foundation for the company's OpenPath commitment that enables customers to mitigate risk and cost-effectively adopt unified communications. This promise is underwritten through our OpenScale service portfolio, which includes international, managed, and outsource capability. Siemens Enterprise Communications is owned by a joint venture of The Gores Group and Siemens AG. The joint venture also encompasses Enterasys Networks, which provides network infrastructure and security systems, delivering a perfect basis for joint communications solutions.

For more information about Siemens Enterprise Communications, please visit [www.siemens-enterprise.com](http://www.siemens-enterprise.com)

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